



Edwards Mayor.

Martis 14. die Octobris, 1679. Annoq;
Regni Regis CAROLI Secundi, Angliæ, &c. xxxi.

THIS COURT doth desire Mr. Williams to Print his Sermon Preached at the Guild-Hall Chappel, on Sunday last, before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of this City.

Wagstaffe.



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A
S E R M O N

Preached before the
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE

Lord Mayor,

AND
ALDERMEN of the City of LONDON,
AT THE
GUILD-HALL Chappel,
October 12. 1679.

BY
JOHN WILLIAMS,
Rector of St. Mildreds Poultry, London.

L O N D O N :
Printed by M. Clark, for R. Chiswel, and W. Kettilby,
at the Rose and Crown, and at the Bishops Head
in St. Pauls Church-Yard. 1679.

STERMON

RIGHT HONORABLE

Lord Mayor

ALDERMAN of the City of London
JULIUS W. CHAPMAN

JOHN WILLIAMS

Printed by J. W. Williams, 10, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.

To the Right Honourable
Sir JAMES EDWARDS,
LORD MAYOR of LONDON,
And to the
Court of **ALDERMEN.**

Right Honourable,



That the terms are upon which our Church hath stood, with the Church of Rome, since the Reformation, and how well it hath acquitted it self in the matters disputed betwixt us, is very well known to the World. But notwithstanding the power of Truth, and the success that hath aforetime attended the endeavours of such as have amongst us maintained it, we have found by experience, that we have of late gained little upon them by all our diligence. What Political Reasons there are for it besides becomes not me to enquire; but that our Divisions amongst our selves have been a principal one, and given our Adversaries both the confidence to set upon us afresh, and also an opportunity
of

The Epistle Dedicatory.

of so doing with greater security, is what no one can be ignorant of. This is one evident Cause of our present danger, and what we can therefore never hope to avoid, without uniting upon some common Principle and Foundation. It is this that I have endeavoured to point and make out in the ensuing Discourse, with what success I must leave others to judge; but which I hope may be the better received as it had your Approbation, and hath now your Order and desire to have it made more publick. In obedience to which I have ventured it abroad, that I may thereby publish how much I am,

Right Honourable,

Your humble servant

John Williams.

A
S E R M O N
O N

E P H E S. iv. 16.

From whom the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joynt supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of it self in love.

IN the beginning of this Chapter the Apostle doth exhort the *Ephesians* to the Christian duty of Charity; and that he may come upon them with the greater advantage, doth make use of several Arguments to inforce it, v. 4, 5, 6. taken from the state they are in, and the profession they are of; that there is *one Body* of which they are members, *one Spirit* by which they are quickned,

one Hope of Eternal Life by which they are excited, *one Lord* whom they profess to obey, *one Faith* and Form of belief that they imbrace, *one Baptism* by which they are initiated into the Church, and *one God* whom they do depend upon, and from whom they do receive all Temporal and Spiritual gifts and blessings. And whereas it may be thought that the variety of Gifts and Officers in the Church should minister to contention, he adds, that however they may be abused, and the persons in those circumstances may happen to pervert them, yet as they were primarily intended by Christ the dispenser and disposer of all for the order, the safety, and the Edification of the Church, so they do make much for it, v. 11, 12, 13, 14. For it is *from him that the whole body fitly joyned together and compacted, &c. maketh increase of the body, &c.*

In which words there is a comparison implied betwixt the Natural body, and the Christian Church, called the *body of Christ*, v. 12. that as the Natural body doth consist of several parts, and those parts have a dependence upon the head, and are so fitly compacted and united among themselves, that there is a distribution of nourishment to all of them according to their measure and capacity: So there is in the Church (1.) a Supream power in Christ the Head, (2.) a due subordination of the several parts to the Head, (3.) a strict relation betwixt these several parts to the Head and to each other, (4.) a deriva-

derivation of all necessary supply from the Head; and from each communicated to the other according to their measure, proportion and relation.

All that I shall at present take notice of from hence, is,

1. The firmness of the union that is to be amongst Christians, they are *joynd and compacted together*; not only as they are at large members of the Catholick Church, called here *the whole Body*; but also as they are more strictly combined, according to the places of their residence, in particular Societies and Churches; having Officers to guide and minister unto them, and Laws by which they regulate themselves in such Combinations. This I take to be signified in this verse, (1) in the phrase *ἐν ἑκάστη ἐκκλησίᾳ, every joynt*, which I conceive hath respect to the Officers of the Church, whether extraordinary, as Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists; or ordinary, as Pastors and Teachers, v. 11. which the Apostle saith, v. 12. were *οἱ ἀποστολὴ καὶ ἡγεμῶνες*, for the perfecting and compacting of the Saints, and upon whom the gifts did primarily descend for the edifying of the body of Christ, v. 12. These are as Ligaments and Joynts to the body, that do move, strengthen, preserve, and secure it, (2.) It's further signified in the phrase *ἐν ἑκάστῃ μέρει, every part*, by which I conceive is to be understood, with respect to the limbs of a Natural body, the particular Churches which Christians according to their convenience of abode and affairs

were cast and distributed into. And this I the rather think, because I find particular Christians called often in Scripture *μέλη* members of Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27. But this word *μέρος*, part, is never so applied to any particular person; and when on other occasions it is made use of, it constantly hath a respect to number and multitude, as, Acts xxiii. 6. *one part were Jews*, &c. And this may further be presumed from what the Apostle saith, Chap. ii. 19, 20. where after he had spoken of the Catholick Church, of which all Christians are fellow-Citizens, he proceeds to their particular union as a Christian Church in that place, v. 22. *In whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

2. Here is the advantage of such an union, it *maketh increase of the body*; and is for the preservation of it, as ver. 14. doth imply, *that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine*, &c. which was to be prevented by the compacting the Saints together, ver. 12.

From what hath been hitherto said I observe,

1. That a constitution or fixed order in the Church doth make much for the increase and safety of it, and is necessary towards the propagating and securing of Religion.

2. That a constitution which takes in these ends is to be regarded. I shall at this time chiefly apply my self to the latter, *viz.* the securing of Religion, and I shall do it in this following order.

1. By

1. By shewing that the preservation of a Church and Religion, is mainly depending upon a settled Order and Constitution.

2. By considering what that Constitution is, particularly with respect to our selves, in this Nation, and our present circumstances.

3. By shewing what regard is to be given to such a Constitution, and how far it's the interest of every true Protestant to comply with it.

First, I shall shew that *the preservation of a Church and Religion is mainly depending upon a settled Order and Constitution.* When I speak of the great security of the Church, the respect which it hath therein primarily to God the great Patron of it, is to be supposed, who can and will protect it against the most formidable powers which may threaten and invade it: And when I speak of other security, I am to be understood of Prudential and Rational means, and what is to be done in that way on our part in order thereunto: And of this sort I take a Constitution to be. Without this there cannot be a Church, *i.e.* without Laws and Officers for direction; without having the work of those Officers set forth and described; and without a people that bear such a respect to those Officers, and to each other as the Laws agreed upon do require. For if every person be at liberty to be what he will and do as he please; either to rule or to be ruled, to teach or to be taught, to act or forbear, the Church would be.

be none, and from being like a *City that is compass'd together*, it would be no better than a field of contention and confusion.

And what particular persons are with respect to a Church, such are particular Churches with respect to the whole; and therefore as every Christian is to look upon himself as a member of the Church, and to bear a due respect to the body of which he is: So are particular Churches as parts of a greater body to have a regard to it. It's for the safety and edification of every particular Christian not to stand alone, but to be united to a body; and it's for the security and advantage of particular Churches to draw into more general Combinations, that so they may upon all Emergencies receive mutual advice and assistance. And this is to be done according to the Nations they are of, the government they are under, the times they are in; which kind of combination is usually known by the name of a *National Church*, that is, when there is an union of particular Churches under one Common Form. This is in it self a thing most decent, and what, as it doth unite the hearts of a People or Nation more firmly to one another, so doth also provide for their security: for as all good order doth contribute to safety; so the more general that Order is, the greater security must redound from it. And therefore however some may in speculation please themselves with particular Churches altogether

ther independent upon others; yet whenever it comes to practice, they are forced to take other measures, and to enter into larger Combinations, as it happened in *New England*. And from hence it is that the *Quakers* themselves how much soever they pretend to be against all Forms, are fallen into such a kind of Order, and have several Laws amongst themselves, which become binding to the rest, and are more or less as extensive as their party is. Which is therefore in Print complained of by several amongst them, as Usurpation and Arbitrary Imposition *. The usefulness of Order to the purposes spoken of is what Nature and Reason do dictate, and what in all other Cases no man doth dispute; it's that which brought men into Societies, and is the great preserver of them. It's that which is the safety of Nations, and Armies, Cities, and Families; and it would be the opinion of all men in the present case, were but their own Religion and Constitution to be the measure prescribed. No man can deny, but if the Nation was all in one way, and the people all of one mind in matters of Religion, it would be as much for our Peace and mutual Satisfaction, our Welfare and Security, as it is lovely in it self. And then methinks no man should deny but that a Constitution of one sort or another, which may reach the general part of the Nation, and most suite the Govern-

* *Spirit of the Har.
Hidden things
brought to light.
Bullocks Tracts.
Q. Spiritual Court.*

Government of it, doth in its degree tend the same way, and that it's more for our safety to have that which is a National Constitution than to be without it.

And this is the more necessary in regard of a Potent Enemy that we have to encounter, against whom all the force that we can raise, and the care that we can take will be little enough to secure us. For the Church of *Rome* is so strongly compacted, and so well provided of whatever may support it at home, or enlarge its Conquests abroad, that it will vie with any Constitution in the World. There is first an Universal Head who challengeth the Supreme power over all Churches in the World, and whom all in their Communion are bound to acknowledg as such. It's he that hath the power of calling Councils, arbitrating Differences, passing Decrees, granting Dispensations, issuing out Indulgences, making Expositions, and of bringing all things to a certainty and determination in their Church. It's he whom all the Bishops and Priests amongst them do swear particular obedience to, and which they hold so Sacred and Inviolable, that it shall cancel all Obligations to, and defend them against all Impositions of any Secular Prince whatsoever. It's his Commands all the several Orders of Monks and Friers do observe, and his pleasure they attend; and by their vast numbers spread through the Christian World, and the intricate

depen-

dependence which they have upon him, he hath both an opportunity of gaining Intelligence, and of obtaining ordinarily what he designs with greater facility and success than any Prince by his Ambassadors, Agents and Correspondents whatsoever. For these are the constant Emissaries of the Church, and by whose Generals residing at *Rome* all Orders that may be for the Common Good, are immediately dispersed, and so Religiously received, that wherever these persons are sent they immediately go, whatever they are commanded they out of hand do, which they do with the greater resolution bend themselves to, as they have cast off all Relations, and have no expectations from them; have no posterity to take care of, or that have any dependence upon them, and so if they miscarry, the mischief of it lights wholly upon themselves. And these that are chosen out for that purpose, being persons of inquisitive and active tempers, capable of looking into affairs, considering circumstances, and finding out the interests, designs and inclinations of others, and supplied with all things that may be necessary for such an undertaking, have a great advantage over any people that are without such Instruments. (2.) There are besides great preferments and hopes of gaining them, to whet their Industry and encourage their endeavours: for those of all kinds that Church doth abound in, and flows with that wealth gathered from First Fruits, Tithes, Ap-

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peals,

peals, Dispensations, Pardons, Jubilees, Pilgrimages and other innumerable ways of advantage, as that no design shall fail for want of succour in that kind. (3.) There is a settled Conformity throughout that Church, and all agree in their Service as it's now establisht, that whatever differences there are among them, yet They seem to be One to others, and are really so in what makes for their own advantage and security. (4.) They have a great power over the Laity in the interests they make among them for the reasons abovesaid; and by obliging them to Auricular Confession, by which their secrets are poured into the Priests bosom; and so as they are under a tye not to do any thing which they would not trust him with the knowledge of; so if they have committed a secret to him, dare not disoblige him for fear he should disclose it. By which means men dare not own their doubt, or so much as entertain a thought of doing otherwise than the Church will allow. Lastly, there are such permissions and allowances in their Church, that for the service and good of it men may shape their course as they please, take up any Garb, and fashion themselves to any temper of men or state of people whatsoever, for such an end.

So that from a Church thus Constituted, and Established with Power and Policy, there needs all the industry, consideration, and unity, that can be to preserve those that are threatned by it.

And

And this without a settled general and National Constitution I see not how it may be. We may as well think to go out against a veterane and well disciplined Host, and hope to overcome them without any known Orders to be observed, or Officers to Lead and Command, as to defend our selves against the invasion of so powerful and formed a Church as that is. For had we no Form at all, or were there different petty Forms without submission to one as Supream, there would, it's likely, be as many Factions as Forms, and those so furiously contending with each other, that the very approach of the Enemy would hardly be able to curb the violence with which each would bear upon the other: or however there could not be that good understanding, that necessary Intelligence, that sober advice, that mutual care for each others safety, and that ability to advance it as when there is but one. The Adversary would have an opportunity of sowing dissensions, of widening differences, and of infecting the multitude with such Principles as should make them a fit prey, for his own power, when there is a fit season for it.

From all which the necessity of having a General and National Constitution doth appear where it is not, and of maintaining one where it is.

2. I shall consider *what that Constitution is that may best preserve a Church*, and a Church whose welfare is maligned by such an Adversary as I have before described. And that I shall do by laying down some

Characters which may belong to such a Constitution, and then by searching for such a Church as may have a Correspondence to these Characters.

1. That Constitution which is agreeable to Scripture, and the practice of the Primitive and Universal Church, is most likely to maintain it self against all opposition. For then it is able to encounter an Adversary with great advantage, and beat him from his strongest holds, so far as Authority is admitted to the decision of the Case. If we have the Scripture on our side, none can ever warrantably throw us out of possession, or make good any charge against us: since whatever we hold or do by vertue of its Authority will remain firm and unshaken, and which none can touch upon but they must strike at the Foundation of Truth and Religion. And if we have the Primitive Church, and the Records of the first Ages to stand by us, as we have thereby the best Expositors of Scripture, so the best Authority next to it; and which none can wholly reject without great rashness and arrogance.

2. That's to be supposed a Constitution of this Nature, which the Adversaries do most of all oppose, and seek the downfal of. If we see an Enemy bending all his force against a particular place, and passing by others with all hast and diligence imaginable seeks to surprize it by Stratagem, or overthrow it by violence, we may well suppose it to be of great importance, and what he is most of all
appre-

apprehensive of danger from. And if we find the Church of *Rome* always undermining and assaulting some particular Establishment amongst us, or some one Church more than others in the world, we have good cause to think such a Church and Constitution to be considerable in it self, and what is also a great affliction and obstruction to them.

3. That is likely to be a Constitution of this kind which best suits the Civil Government, that hath such a dependence upon it, and is so complicated with it, that it cannot carry on a different interest from, or seek the trouble and ruin of the State, but it must also trouble and ruin it self. Whereas if these two are divided, or have several Centers to respect, there will be a continual contention, which can end in nothing but destruction.

4. That is likely to be a Constitution for this purpose which is most generally suited to the temper of the people, and which even the greatest part of Dissenters will choose to dwell under, rather than another. There cannot be a Constitution which all will equally like, approve of, and agree in; and since a National Constitution is necessary for our preservation, that which will come nearest to this is most eligible.

5. That Constitution may be presumed to be fit for this end which we have had good Experience of and know what it's able to do and is sufficient for. For whatever semblance another may have of great virtue

tue and sufficiency, yet nothing can be positively concluded, because that which hath not been at all, or not fully tried, is very uncertain, and so unsafe, especially in a dangerous Season. It may then be what people may as much slight as they did before desire it, and as soon grow weary of it as before they were forward to embrace it. It may come for ought we know to yield the cause instead of maintaining it, and be so far from resisting Popery, that it may be swallowed up by it.

6. That Constitution seems most fitted to this end, which is capable of the best consultation and most vigorous prosecution; where the persons concerned in preserving it, neither want Education, nor Experience to know what may be for the welfare of the Church; and have also a sufficient Power and Authority to provide it. For without these advantages of training them up in the ways of Knowledge and Experience, those to whom the care of the Church is committed would rather ruin than preserve it, rather betray than rescue it, by their weakness or their ignorance.

7. I may add to this, That which hath encouragements for learning and industry, and ways to bring them up in the one, and quicken them to the other. Without these, Learning would be scarce, and the spirits of men sluggish and heavy: and without these a Church that is eminent herein, as Rome is, would quickly espy and make their advantage; as she

she hath already done in the Eastern Churches, which in little more than an Age are almost overrun by her: And that though they had a settled and Ancient Constitution, and were generally sufficiently prejudiced against the *Romish* Usurpation; yet what from their poverty, and their ignorance (which follows from the former.) The Supremacy of the Pope is now there in very many parts their avowed principle. And if at that distance they have thus far prevailed, they must necessarily meet with the like success in a Church when nearer to them, if Learning be not encouraged by an honourable maintenance.

8. That Constitution is likely to answer this end which By-standers, and so the most Impartial persons have given their verdict for, and which they promise themselves greater security by, if they could obtain it.

9. That is best for us which in such a time of fear, as this, is most likely to create least disturbance, and expose us to the least danger. For the particular Case, now, is to give us a Rule, and that is best to us which will best secure us against the publick mischief.

Having gon thus far to shew that a setl'd National and General Constitution is necessary towards our preservation, and to find out such Characters as in the opinion of all unbyassed and considering persons may fit such a Constitution as is best for us. I have nothing else to do but to find out a Constitution
which

which may fit those Characters. But by this time you will prevent me in your thoughts, and perceive how these things do agree with our present Constitution, and what reason we have to maintain it.

But before I proceed to draw the parallel, and set it before you, I shall premise

First, that we are to take the several Characters before laid down together, for that is the best, which all agree in.

Secondly, That these Characters are not to be applied to any single part of the Constitution, but to the whole. For we are not obliged to maintain that every particular thing in our Church is the best, and that nothing in it can be mended. For it's freely declared otherwise, as particularly in *the Communion to be used the first day of Lent*. It is sufficient that the Constitution is in the whole agreeable to those Characters.

Thirdly, much less do I think my self obliged to defend the miscarriages that may be in the Administration of what belongs to the Constitution, when they flow not from the Constitution it self. For they are the faults of the persons, not the faults of the Constitution. But,

Fourthly, I say that the present Constitution amongst us, best suits those Characters, and as it's in it self the best Constitution that I know of upon the face of the Earth, so it's most fit for us, and is to be best thought of by us. And this will appear by comparing our Constitution with the Characters before laid down.

First

1. Our Constitution is agreeable to Scripture and the practice of the Primitive and Universal Church. It's agreeable to Scripture: For it owns nothing for Canonical, but what is divinely inspired, and makes nothing necessary, but what is thereby made necessary. Whatever things indifferent, and of a middle nature are taken in, are only used as indifferent, and what are therefore alterable in themselves, and *upon just causes may be altered and changed, and therefore are not to be esteemed equal with God's Law*, as ** Rubr. of Ceremonies, why some abolished, &c.* our Church declares *. And those that are in use are what she hath the ancient Church for her pattern in. Her Government in the substance and essential parts of it, is, what was unanimously and universally the Government in the Church, according to the most ancient and authentic Records that we have in Being.

2. This constitution of ours is the more considerable, as it is what our Adversaries of *Rome* do most inveigh against, and labour to overthrow. It is the weakness of some to accuse us of Popery, because of Episcopacy and a Liturgy, and other things in which we do agree. For although they have Episcopacy and a Liturgy in the Church of *Rome*, yet our Episcopacy and Liturgy is what they bear an immortal hatred unto, neither owning the former, nor suffering their people to be present at the latter. For as long as *Episcopacy* doth not acknowledge the *Pope's* Supremacy; and as long as our Liturgy is discharged

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of

of the sopperies and Idolatry that theirs is stuffed with, it's to their reproach. This of ours is not only an established, but also a very regular Constitution, and bears in it so great a Conformity to the ancient order of the Church, that there is none in the world which they so much try their skill and their practices upon. And therefore whereas they let the writings of other Parties amongst us, lye by with such a kind of contempt, that I remember not above Two that for this Twenty years they have vouchsafed to take notice of, and to reply to (and for which I could give a particular reason;) in the mean time they have run upon the Church with all their might, and picked out the *Goliaths* of their Party to encounter the Writers amongst us: As well knowing if they could make them to give ground and retreat, the day was like to be their own. This I observe, not to disparage the labours of our dissenting Brethren in that kind, but to shew wherein the strength of the Protestant Religion is thought, even by our Adversaries, to consist.

3. Our Constitution doth best sute the Civil Government, as it doth maintain the King in his Just Rights, and doth not invade the Liberty of the Subject. The case in these Nations formerly was, that the Church-constitution rendred the condition of Princes and People unsafe and perplexed; for having a dependance upon, and giving themselves over to a blind obedience to a Foreign power, viz. the Pope, there were always Jealousies of each other, and very turbulent

turbulent Factions maintained to the great prejudice of the Kingdom; as in the time of King Henry the I. by *Anselm*, and in the time of Henry the II. by *Becket* Arch-bishops of *Canterbury*. But now the Supremacy being settled upon the King, and maintained by the Church, there is but one Interest, and the Peace of the Publick is thereby provided

for *. For the Church hath now Laws made for the Clergy, as well

* Of this, v. Dr. *Puller's* Moderation of the Church of England. c. 12.

as others, by the Supreme Council of the Nation, and is as much obliged to submit to them when made. But it is evident how little these things are considered and respected by any other Parties, in comparison of ours, and what I choose rather to refer you to others for satisfaction in *.

* Dr. *Puller* v. supra. p. 339.

4. Our present constitution doth best suite the temper of the Nation, and which the greatest part even of Dissenters would choose to dwell under, rather than another. That which pretends mostly to a competition with ours is the Presbyterian, as it is a National form. But if we should come to enquire into the inclinations of those that pass under that name, I dare be confident that there are very few of them (if any) that are satisfied with the frame that is laid down, and the orders and rules that have been observed in the Churches, where that way of government hath been established: or if they are, it is that at which the people are generally prejudiced, and which the rest of Dissenters do unanimously complain of,

and protest against : Should we come to the Congregational way, then the Churches must be consisting of such persons as are gathered out of Churches, and who are presumed from some good grounds to be in a state of grace, and that must oblige themselves by a particular Covenant at their first admission. By which means all that scruple these terms, or that are not really converted, or not so thought by them, will have no relation to the Church, and they and their children be no members of it. And how this would relish with the Nation in general, or other dissenters, may be well conceived. So that either we must have no Constitution, or the present, if we will gratifie the greatest part of the Nation, and even that of the Dissenters themselves. For whatever other Constitution is uppermost will have more adversaries than ours, as it will have, besides the other dissenters, the present Church and the members of it to be against it, who are more in number than any other party, and I think I may say, than all others put together.

5. Ours is a constitution which we have had good experience of, and have seen how it hath kept its ground, and bid such constant defiance to the Church of *Rome*, that they of that Church have not been able to run it down with all their prowels : and over whom, were it not for our divisions at home, which take up the thoughts of those that are the Guardians of it, we should have had such advantage, as might have made them weary of attempting us. There

was

was no reformation in the world that was more orderly begun, more regularly pursued, and more stedfastly maintained than ours. It was that which was water'd with the Blood of the Reformers, and hath for above this Hundred Years been still upheld by the unwearied endeavours of those that were in place amongst us. And notwithstanding all the Popery that hath been charged upon us, I dare challenge any to shew such Monuments of Learning and Industry; such clear detections of the Apostasie, and such solid confutations of the arguments of that Church, as are extant, and have been writ by the Bishops, the Clergy, and even the Laity of ours.

6. In our constitution there is a capacity of the best consultation and most vigorous prosecution. In respect of the Church it self, as there is a due subordination in it, where the Inferiour are under the inspection and command of their Superiours. And where the Superiours are often present at Debates in Councils, have an hand in making and passing Laws, are conversant in affairs of the Nation; and so are in a better capacity of espying out and providing against the attempts of the Enemy, than if they were to reside upon particular Cures, and to attend the business of them. For then for want of such we should be an easie prey to those that had a will and power to seize us.

7. I might insist upon the encouragements amongst us for Learning and Industry, both in preparation

ration for the service of the Church in the Universities, and after they are admitted to it, in Livings, and Dignities; by which means the Clergy may be in a capacity to furnish themselves with Books, and all necessary accomplishments. And then again upon the care that is taken, or might be, that none but such as are competently learned be received and entertained.

8. Our constitution hath the good opinion of impartial persons, such as Learned Protestants abroad, many of whom it hath courteously received, cherished and maintained. Indeed our Church is looked upon as the top of the Reformation, and to which in difficult cases others have made their appeals. It hath been honoured by our Friends, feared by our Enemies, and contemned by none but our selves at home: And how much that hath been, and is to the damage and hazard of the Protestant Religion, both at home and abroad, might easily be made to appear.

9. Our constitution at this juncture and season is our great security, and what will expose us to the least disturbance and danger: For whilst this stands we cannot be worse than we are, but if this be thrown down, God knows into what confusions we may be cast, or whether ever we may come to a settlement again. I am sensible that there are some that do with all their might endeavour the total subversion of it, and whom nothing less will content, than with

Edom,

Edom, to say, Pl. 137. 7. raise it, raise it, even to the foundation thereof. But I would fain know what is hereby intended, whether such would bring us to confusion or settlement? If the former, I hope all good Protestants of what Perswasion soever, will look upon them as their mortal Enemies; since nothing then can be the issue but destruction, both to Religion and our selves: For whatever they may pretend, they are far from the temper and spirit of the Gospel, where we are told, 1 Cor. 14. 33. that *God is not the Author of confusion, but of Peace in all the Churches of the Saints.* If a settlement be intended, I would as willingly know where they will fix? For it's a most wretched imprudence to pull down the old Mound, before they are provided of another, and to expose us to *the Boar out of the Wood, and the wild Beast of the Field* to enter in, and to make havock of the Church of God, for want of a fence and security. If they are come to any issue, and are provided of a constitution to set up, Are they secure that this project of theirs shall without delay be taken into consideration, and considered without partiality? Will there no controversies arise about the terms of Communion, or the nature and parts of that Government, which they would substitute in the room of what they now quarrel at? Can they secure us, that the frame which they have laid will be better than that which they seek to overthrow, and that upon Experience, and in the current of as

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many Years it shall not prove as faulty as what falls under their present censure? Can they secure us, that their Model will take, and that all Parties that now joyn against ours, will center in theirs? or that those that dissent from them shall meet with better quarter, or fairer usage, when theirs is advanced to the Supremacy, than they do under ours? If this cannot be assured, or so much as made probable, we had as good be where we are.

But suppose there could be a better constitution than what we have, and that matters might be better regulated; yet we must consider our present circumstances, in which without doubt it is better to bear with an inconvenience than a mischief, and to be content to be secure with what we have, than to venture all for somewhat that we have not. For a dissolution cannot be at this time without greater mischiefs, than what can be conceived to be in the constitution. It being as in a Fort, where perhaps the Fortifications may be made more regular, and contrived to the greater security of it; but though this might be done in a time of peace and leisure, yet to pull down the old for this purpose, whilst the Enemy is before it, would be to throw it into his possession, and he that should advise to it, and adventure upon it, though with a good intention, would do as great a mischief, as if he conspired with the Enemy. We are now in the midst of danger, and have an Enemy that is deeply concerned to let no opportunity

opportunity slip that may be to our damage; and if we now pull down our constitution, which is the bulwark of our Religion, we expose our selves to his mercy, and he that should attempt it is in these circumstances to be looked upon as no less dangerous an Enemy, than if he were of the Party, and equally concerned in the plotting our ruine. For my part, I had rather continue in a Town that is defensible, though not fortified altogether to my mind, than neglect the present use of that, and betake my self to great consultation to amend it, and in the midst of all my curiosity be with *Archimedes* knockt o'th' head by the Enemy.

So that the preservation of the present Constitution, how irregular soever it may seem to some, will less expose us than the dissolution of it. But yet how far it is from being really so, I have before shewed. And now I shall proceed to the

3. Third general, to shew *what regard is to be had to such a constitution.* If what I have said be true, that the present constitution be the best qualified for making resistance to, and defending us against the Church of *Rome*; if it be the common Bulwark of the Protestant Religion amongst us, and the great security of it abroad, it becomes every one that is a true lover of our Religion, to seek and promote the welfare of our constitution.

I know this will be a great piece of self-denial in those that do dissent from it, and that perhaps in so

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doing

doing they may not increase or derive any particular power to themselves: But if it be really the interest of our Religion, I hope they will see it to be their duty, and make it their endeavour. When the Jews were carried captive to *Babylon*, they were required to *seek the peace of the City, whither they were carried captive, and to pray unto the Lord for it: For, saith the Text, in the peace thereof shall ye have peace: Jerem. 29. 7.* When in a state of captivity, and amongst Heathens, they were thus obliged to have a respect to the welfare of the place and government. And then much more should we, when our Religion is the same in its fundamentals, and the Civil liberties are, what all are alike partakers of. We all agree in the vital parts of our Religion, we agree that Popery is a common Enemy, we agree that it is our Interest to joyn against it. And where shall we meet, if it be not in some settlement: and in what shall we agree, if the present Constitution will not so far unite us?

I am sensible that there are many that will not understand this; that are like those, *Lament. 4. 12. that would not have believed that the adversary, and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem;* that do the Church of Rome what it can, it can never make its way, and set up its standard amongst us. They think if they can clear themselves of our Church at home, that they are sufficiently provided against danger from abroad. They are ready

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to say, as Tyrus of Jerusalem, Ezek, 26. 2. *Alas she is broken, that was the gates of the People, she is turned unto me, I shall be replenished now she is laid waste:* And each Party is apt to promise much to it self upon such a victory and change.

Such as these do watch to break down the carved work thereof with Axes and Hammers. These labour to cast Fire into the Sanctuary, and attempt all ways to alienate the affections of the People from the present establishment, and to raise slanders upon any that appear in its defence. They are these that load the present Ministry with contempt, and are continually in their Pamphlets exposing them, as well knowing that if they can remove the Shepherds, or make the People to believe them to be Wolves, they have done their business, and the whole Flock is likely to lye at their Mercy.

These are they that make way for Popery to enter in. For is it not the Ministry of the Church of England, that appears in the Breach upon all occasions, that either flings down or takes up the Gantlet, and that hath hitherto so far prevailed, that the *Romish* Party hath at last almost quitted the way of Argument, and hath attempted the Conquest of us by Blood and Violence, when they could not do it by Learning and Reason?

If we had nothing but a Worldly interest to move us, if that were the Compass we steer by,

(as some do basely insinuate) if there were nothing of duty in the Contention, we might be as quiet as others, and make our terms upon as good advantage with a Church that hath store of preferments to reward us, and where the Clergy hath a reverence paid to them beyond what we do meet with, or may expect in ours. If we would shew quarter to them, we are sensible enough that they would shew it to us. But when notwithstanding all our Industry and Care, all our Pains and Hazard we shall be Papists, there can no security be given that any are not such, and much less those Gentlemen that take the liberty thus to asperse us.

But it is not with us the boldness of these Persons hath stopped, but they will bring others into the same Condemnation.

If the mischief had staid with us we might be silent, or if the State and Religion may be secured, and we be ruined alone, it might not be so material. Let them proceed in their calumnies and mischievous Designs: If that were all, I hope God will give us patience to bear whatever they may throw or inflict upon us. But when the Government it self is assaulted, and things are come to this pass, that any one that will not strike in with them in all points shall be a Papist, and what not, when a Man must not speak for the
Church

Church of *England*, but he must be hoysing up Sails for the Church of *Rome*, it's time to refel such a Calumny, and to expose the Design.

O what a plealant sight is this to the Church of *Rome*, to see the Storm diverting from themselves, and that the work which hath cost them such Consultation, Expencc and Labour, shall be done to their hands; and instead of the sore disappointment, which they did Hourly expect, have no more to do but to stand still, and see the destruction of their greatest Enemy. To see us by such an artifice made so jealous one of another, that we know not whom to trust, and each Partry ready to turn the Plot upon the other.

It is fit that Mens eyes should be opened, and be made to see whither they are driving. It's fit to put a stop to the Danger which is coming upon us.

I do not charge this upon all Dissenters; I know there are many of them that are so wise to observe it, and so sincere as to abhor it, as well as we; such that see into the mischievous consequences of these Proceedings. I may well say, is not the hand of the Jesuit in all this? what either proceeds from them, or Men of their temper.

It's high time then for all sober Persons to look about them, and rather to think of what is fit and necessary to be done for our common safety,
than

than for a private satisfaction. Let them lay aside all little grudges and animosities, and their present dissatisfactions, till it is a time to find relief for them.

It would be an happy time to find the Nation of the temper that it was generally in, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, to have all conspiring and serving God in the same way. But since this is not likely to be; let all however be over-ruled by a Principle of common safety and interest, and do what may best serve to promote it; which is, in defending what is the Bulwark of our Religion, by commending what we like in it, by joyning with it in what we can, and by dissenting with modesty where we cannot. For next to the being of one mind in Religion, there would nothing more daunt and strike a greater terrour into our Adversaries, than to see us stand up for one Constitution, and unanimously resolved to maintain that which is the general Mound and Security. Hereby our dissenting Brethren will give satisfaction to the Government they live under, they will shew that they are Christians and Protestants indeed. They will then shew themselves worthy of favour, and will prompt Authority to find out a way to extend it to them.

We shall then begin to be One, and from being tossed to and fro, we shall be growing towards
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the temper and state of the Text, when *the whole Body* fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every Joyn^t supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body, unto the edifying of it self in love.

O Lord, We beseech thee, let thy continual Pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and because it cannot continue in Safety without thy Succour, Preserve it evermore by thy Help and Goodness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

F I N I S.

the temper and state of the Text, when the whole
Body fully joined together, and completed by that which
every John supplied, according to the essential meaning
in the measure of every part, making measure of the whole
and the setting of it self in love.

And it is, for which I am, for the cause
and for the cause and for the cause
and for the cause it cannot continue in society
to have the cause, for the cause it is
made by the body and the body, through
the cause of the cause, Amen.

